

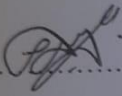
**Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in
Mulpani Rural Municipality ,Jhapa.**

**A Thesis Submitted to:
Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
Department of Anthropology
Bhadrapur, Jhapa
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Master of Anthropology**

**Submitted by:
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2025**

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "**Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality ,Jhapa.**" represents my own work, which has been done for the fulfillment of Master's Degree in Anthropology at Mechi Multiple Campus, Jhapa and has not published anywhere. I have acknowledged all necessary information and sources.



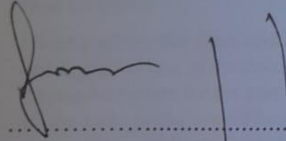
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Recommendation Letter

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality ,Jhapa."** Has been prepared by Mrs. Pujan Kumari Acharya under my supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Anthropology. I forward this thesis for final evaluation.



Assistant Prof. Sushil Kumar Khanal
Supervisor

Self- Declaration

To: Department of Anthropology.

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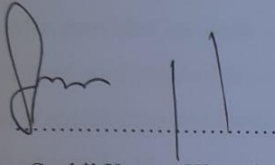
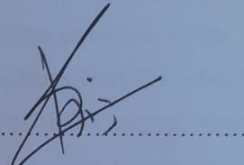
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This Thesis entitled “Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality ,Jhapa” submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Mechi Multiple Campus by Mrs. Pujan Kumari Acharya has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee. Defended. It is recommended to carry out the work as per suggestions and guidance of supervisor Asst. Prof. Sushil Kumar Khanal and submit the thesis for evaluation and viva voce examination.

 Sushil Kumar Khanal Supervisor	 External Examiner
<p>.....</p> <p>Mahesh Poudel Head or Department</p>	

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Pujan Kumari Acharya

2nd September 2025

Abstract

This study investigates the **Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality**, Jhapa District, Nepal. Although teaching is widely regarded as a suitable and respectable career path for women—offering social recognition and flexible working hours—female teachers in rural settings of Nepal continue to confront deep-rooted structural and cultural barriers. These barriers include limited access to leadership positions, facing gender-based discrimination, and experiencing the dual burden of balancing domestic and professional responsibilities. In a patriarchal society, where women are traditionally relegated to household roles, their increasing presence in education signals progress but also exposes persistent inequalities. Grounded in a post-positivist and feminist anthropological framework, the study centers women’s lived experiences while acknowledging the researcher’s positionality and the socio-cultural context. Feminist anthropology challenges male-dominated narratives, highlighting how gender and power dynamics influence professional experiences. Post-positivism adds a reflexive, critical dimension to understanding social realities. Data were collected through questionnaires from 71 female teachers across 11 schools (8 community and 3 institutional) and interviews with the teachers. A small number of male teachers were also included to offer comparative insights. Schools were chosen using purposive sampling, while participants were randomly selected, excluding those with less than one week of experience. By integrating structured data with nuanced narratives, the study explores how female teachers navigate systemic barriers and the extent to which educational institutions support or limit their growth. The findings aim to inform gender-responsive education policies and foster inclusive development in rural Nepal.

Keywords: *Anthropology, discrimination, dual roles, patriarchy, teaching*

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is a structured pathway to acquiring skills, and it plays a crucial role in reducing poverty. It significantly enhances the quality of life and empowers people. Both education and literacy are interconnected and reinforce each other. Literacy improves access to essential information, enabling people to perform vital daily tasks and succeed in their work (Bhusal, 2015). Quality education is the foundation for skilled labor, which is essential for national progress. Without high-quality education, a nation's development remains hindered.

Nepali society is predominantly patriarchal, where men are traditionally valued more than women. However, over time, women have increasingly contributed to the formal economy. Many have begun working outside the home to earn money, which has added to their workload. Balancing professional life with household responsibilities can be challenging for working women, who must manage both their home and office duties. Private schools, being profit-driven, are rising in Nepal's economy. Employees, both male and female, in these schools must adhere to strict schedules, ensuring punctuality, regularity, and hard work.

Women in Nepal generally face more economic insecurity than men. Their roles as wives or daughters-in-law are primarily confined to household tasks, while the concept of men as breadwinners remains deeply ingrained in society. Nepal's economy is predominantly based on subsistence agriculture, with women contributing 50% of the household income, compared to 44% by men, and 6% by children aged 10 to 14 (CBS 2012).

Despite the limited employment opportunities available to women, they are increasingly finding respectable jobs, transitioning from self-employed subsistence farmers to positions in urban areas. Shrestha (2012) states that women are now represented across various professional fields—from government roles, such as peons or decision-makers, to positions in education, healthcare, agriculture, social work, and even law enforcement. Additionally, many women work as coaches, trainers, or artisans in small

industries or non-governmental organizations. In industrialized nations, women account for half of all service jobs, although in developing countries, this figure is lower, at 27%.

In urban areas, women are contributing significantly to the household economy by working outside the home. As a result, they are managing multiple roles within the household survival system. Despite the patriarchal nature of Nepali society, which tends to value men's work more than women's, women working in schools face intense pressure to maintain high standards of punctuality, dedication, and hard work, just like their male counterparts. Raggl and Troman (2008) point out that the education system offers a valuable lens through which to examine the concept of 'choice' and the evolving identities of professionals in modern society. Ongoing challenges in attracting and keeping staff in the education sector have led to the development of alternative pathways into teaching, aiming to bring in individuals transitioning from other careers. The analysis centers on significant life events or 'turning points' that prompted their shift into teaching, evaluating whether personal initiative, external pressures, or broader structural factors drove these decisions. Additionally, the study considers how gender influences these career choices.

Education has the potential to transform society by creating new employment opportunities. However, gender disparities in education lead directly to unequal access to the job market. Strauss suggests that significant life shifts, known as turning points, occur across various aspects of our lives, including our professional paths (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). They identify three main categories of turning points in human life through teaching profession: a. Self-initiated turning points, which arise when individuals actively instigate change in their lives, often influenced by personal circumstances, b. Structural turning points, shaped by institutional frameworks or societal structures—such as transitions following the end of mandatory education or reaching retirement age, c. Forced turning points, which occur due to external pressures or events beyond the individual's control, like being laid off from a job. Lovorn, Manning, and Warsh (2017) agree that today, education is the forefront of innovation in for partnerships, engaging in collaborative initiatives that reflect a shared commitment to exploring the most effective ways to merge contemporary research with modern teaching practices.

In Nepal, discrimination in the labor market hinders national economic growth and human development. When women are unable to secure jobs that match their

qualifications, the economy suffers from reduced efficiency and productivity. This disparity highlights the need for women to become more proactive in improving their educational status. Promoting women's education, ensuring equal opportunities, and advancing gender equity are vital for sustainable development. The presence of female teachers has a particularly positive influence on students' well-being, especially for girls in Nepal (Duwadi, 2009). This study attempts to find the situation of the females teaching in community, private and privately owned schools of the Rural Municipality of Mulpani of the Jhapa district. The ongoing study limits itself only to the concerns of females teaching in schools in wards no. 13 and no. 14.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The profession of teaching has been one of the most accessible and respectable options of professions for women all around the globe. In Nepal, particularly in rural areas like Mulpani Rural Municipality of Jhapa District, many women are entering the profession of teaching. The motive of social contribution, job security and personal development has been a driving force for the empowerment of women. Kazi (2013) considers that the teaching profession plays a crucial role in order to attain the national and global standards. Even with this rising footfall, the profession of teaching is a complex combination of opportunities and challenges that frame the professional lives and job careers of the women (Naik, 2008).

This study explores and analyzes the multifaceted experiences of women educators in selected schools located in 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality. These wards reflect typical rural educational settings in Nepal, where socio-cultural norms, limited resources, and institutional constraints interplay with emerging opportunities brought by government policies and educational reforms to enhance personal growth of teachers (Acker, 1989). The study shows how gender roles and expectations affect how women teach, how well they do, and how far they go in their careers. Women who work as teachers have a lot of benefits, such as flexible hours and a respected place in the community. There is also a growing need for women teachers, especially in primary schools. Government programs like reserved quotas, scholarships, and targeted local hiring have also made the field more open to women from different backgrounds. These steps have been very important in getting more women to become teachers. In addition, many people in rural areas see

teaching as a socially acceptable job for women. It gives them a way to be financially independent and a leader in the school system. But many of them are compounded with a whole range of difficulties. The rural woman teacher suffers many of the same issues of gender-related discrimination, limited opportunities for career growth, and insufficient infrastructure support that many other developing nations' experiences. Most of them have to do both teaching and housework, which may keep them from getting involved in more teacher training and taking on leadership roles. Sometimes, their mobility and independence are limited by safety concerns, a lack of access to public transportation, and social taboos. These problems don't just make women less productive and less happy at work; they also stop them from making bigger contributions to the school system. This study aims to examine the intricate dynamics of opportunities and challenges encountered by women educators in rural Nepal. The main goal is to show how women teachers see things and help make schools more supportive, fair, and empowering for current and future generations of female teachers.

Gender, as defined by scholars such as Wijethunga and Jayarathne (2021), is a social construct that assigns specific roles, duties, and status to men and women in society. Traditionally, men have been viewed as the principal providers for their families. The present research adopts an anthropological lens to examine the status of women working in schools within Mulpani Rural Municipality of Jhapa. While there have been a few previous studies in this domain, their scope has been limited by constraints of resources and time. The researcher, an academic staff member at Tribhuvan University (Mechi Multiple Campus), chose this area for focused inquiry. Social dynamics are gradually shifting, as women increasingly contribute to family income, though their efforts often remain undervalued. Many women begin their day early and end it late, yet their labor is frequently dismissed as unproductive (Elatia, Gomez, & Corsi, 2022). These educators shoulder a 'triple burden,' managing reproductive, productive, and teaching roles simultaneously. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the status of women both within their households and workplaces. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What social and anthropological challenges do employed women in the teaching profession face?
- How do employed women balance their dual roles as housewives and teachers?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out the economic role and status of working women in teaching profession. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore the challenges of women involved in teaching profession
- To examine how the teachers balance work at school, society & home.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Although research is conducted on women's participation in various occupations, the status of employed women in private and community schools within Mulpani Rural Municipality is thoroughly explored. Despite the significant role women play in the development of educational institutions, their contributions and challenges are often overlooked and undervalued. Therefore, research in this area is essential. This study is valuable not only for individuals and the nation but also for future researchers. It is expected to contribute to the existing literature on the status of employed women and provide useful insights for planners, researchers, as well as INGOs, NGOs, and the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, who design programs aimed at improving the status of women.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

As every study has some limitation, this study also has some limitations which can be listed as follows:

This present research work makes a close study of only 71 employed women from wards 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality. Due to time and budget, this is a preliminary study. It covers only 13 and 14 wards of study area. Therefore, the findings are not generalized in the context of the other parts of the country. It covers the female teachers teaching in different schools in this area only. Thus, the study does not cover a large area due to limited time and resources.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is structured into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the research, the limitations, and the organization of the study.

The second chapter presents the literature review. The third chapter outlines the research methodology, including the research design, data collection methods, sources of data, tools and techniques used for data collection, and the approach to data analysis.

In the fourth chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the data are provided, covering the background of the respondents, the anthropological characteristics of the respondents, and the level of satisfaction among women employees at various schools within Mulpani Rural Municipality. Finally, the fifth chapter provides a summary of the findings and draws conclusions based on the research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Area of study

Chapter 5: Data Presentations

Chapter 6: Opportunities and Challenges of Women in the
Teaching Profession

Chapter 7: Summary, Findings & Conclusion

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

To guide the present study, various books, reports, and existing research works in this field are reviewed. The literature review focuses on the anthropological challenges faced by employed women in the teaching profession and examines how these women manage their dual roles as teachers and housewives. During the course of the study, relevant literature is reviewed. This chapter includes both theoretical and empirical literature related to the topic.

2.1 Theoretical Review of Literature

In today's anthropological discourse, "gender" is frequently used as a stand-in for discussions about women. It aims to explore and interpret the lived experiences and career trajectories of female faculty members in educational institutions. Li, Xue, and Li (2023) opine that the gradual increase in both the number and proportion of women in teaching roles reflects progress in women's standing and highlights the need for greater attention to this world. However, this growth implies that the historically structural pattern of women teachers in education has changed, and it suggests that the distinct challenges faced by them have been fully addressed.

In the local Nepali context, cultural and social norms play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of female teachers. Teaching is often accepted for women, as it aligns with traditional caregiving roles. Family support remains essential in enabling women to pursue and sustain such careers. Despite growing acceptance, gendered perceptions still exist, affecting how students and parents view female educators. This reflects broader patterns noted by Mollel and Tshabangu (2014), who observed that women in educational leadership often face persistent gender biases rooted in cultural expectations. Such dynamics highlight the complex interplay between tradition, gender roles, and professional identity within education systems.

For this we can go through this figure. The women teachers have double roles at schools and home. They experience role ambiguity at home, school and their organizational culture can be different. Effectively managing these conflicts is key to enhancing employee engagement. It is important for individuals to navigate transitions between work and family

roles carefully and establish clear boundaries, as failing to do so may result in burnout. As the teaching profession increasingly appeals to younger women, it becomes essential to examine how conflicts between work and family life affect their job satisfaction within educational settings.

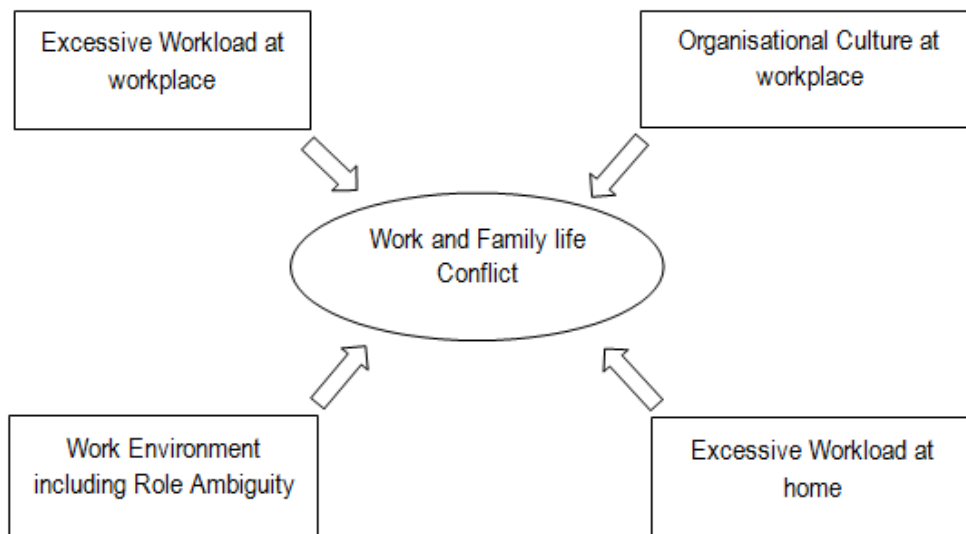


Fig. 1. . Theoretical framework female teachers developed by Atteh, Martin, Oduro, Mensah, & Gyamfi (2020)

Theoretical framework developed by Atteh et al. (2020) explores how female teachers' dual roles—professional duty as a teacher and family responsibility at home. These dual responsibilities create work-family conflict, thereby affecting job satisfaction and burnout. It posits that job- and parent-related stressors interact to erode engagement, unless clear boundaries between home and work are maintained. Effective conflict management strategies can enhance satisfaction and well-being. This framework highlights the importance of supporting female teachers in balancing both domains to prevent burnout and promote retention. Stress to women teachers from schools and family responsibilities can significantly impact their career. Atteh, Martin, Oduro, Mensah, Gyamfi (2020) acknowledge that with work-family conflict is a primary source of such stress.

Balancing responsibilities in both domains often leads to strain and tension, resulting in difficulties maintaining a stable work-life (Addi-Raccah, 2006, Barmao & Mukwana, 2013, Booth, 2005, and Mollel & Tshabangu, 2014). Both job-related and

parental pressures are closely linked to conflicts that emerge between professional and personal roles, which can, in turn, have negative consequences on family issues. From an anthropological perspective, cultural norms and gender roles shape access to leadership in education. In Nepal, female teachers face limitations influenced by societal expectations. Similarly, Addi-Raccah (2006) found that gender-based preferences and the similarity-attraction principle affect leadership access in Israel, showing how deeply embedded social structures influence women's professional advancement across different cultural settings.

Barmao and Mukwana (2013) view the effects of cultural norms, gender roles, and institutional structures on women's representation in school leadership in Kenya from an anthropological standpoint. In Nepal, traditional views constantly establish the leadership of male teachers, and it hinders women's progress despite their increasing participation in teaching positions. Hope from family, society, and the division of labor by gender make this difference even a problematic. People assume that women cannot be leaders as they have to take responsibility of their families. This patriarchal value that are built into social institutions. These problems are part of a global trend where cultural beliefs affect how men and women work together in educational leadership and decision-making roles.

2.2 Teaching as a Profession

Teaching is an occupation that seeks advanced education and specific training skills. It is fixed in knowledge, intended to offer services to others. A profession is more than just a job; it is a career followed by people who desire to contribute to society. It needs a profession skill through rigorous training, learning, and regularly update their expertise through professional development to impart quality education. From an anthropological perspective, career aspirations are shaped by cultural identity, social roles, and community expectations. Booth (2005) highlights how African-American and Caucasian students navigate career goals alongside multiple role planning. Similarly, in Nepal, women's teaching careers reflect societal expectations around gender, where balancing professional roles with traditional duties shapes both aspirations and overall well-being.

In the 19th century, the recognized professions were law, religion, and medicine. Today, the scope of professions has expanded considerably as various occupations have become more specialized and professionalized. Fields ranging from automotive technology

to web design are now recognized as professions due to the requirement for specific educational standards and continuous learning. The ongoing professionalization of teaching has long been a goal. Efforts continue to elevate teaching to the status of a true profession. Professionalism is a multifaceted and evolving concept. Six key criteria are typically used to define a profession:

1. Its members possess a specialized body of knowledge that distinguishes them from other groups.
2. Cooperation within the profession is organized through professional organizations.
3. The profession serves a significant social purpose.
4. It requires a formal period of preparation and continuous growth through professional development.
5. Professionals enjoy a degree of autonomy in their practice.
6. The profession holds control over education standards, admissions, licensing, professional development, ethical practices, and disciplinary matters.

On a global scale, there has been growing recognition of gender disparities in education, particularly in access, opportunities, achievements, perceptions, and assessments. Despite worldwide calls for equality and the advent of Nepal's multiparty democracy, women remain marginalized in education. In Nepal, education is often seen as more important for men than for women, as men are traditionally regarded as breadwinners, while women are confined to household duties. Gender-based differences in educational achievements stem not from biological differences but from socially constructed perceptions of gender roles (Bushra, 2012). World Economic Forum (2021) identifies that to address these disparities, increasing the number of female teachers is often suggested as an effective strategy to improve educational outcomes for girls and women. Gándara and Laesecke (2022) highlight that the female teachers serve as role models and provide a sense of safety for female students. For several years, global enrollment rates in secondary education have reached gender parity (UNESCO, 2018), indicating that, on a worldwide scale, girls now have an equal chance of attending school as boys. The largest gender gaps in enrollment occur in areas where the percentage of female teachers is low.

2.3 Women in Teaching Profession

Globally, there has been growing recognition of the gender disparity in education, with women facing unequal access to opportunities, achievements, and assessments. Despite international calls for gender equality and the establishment of Nepal's multiparty democracy, women continue to be marginalized in education. In Nepal, education is often considered more important for men, as they are seen as the breadwinners, while women are primarily responsible for household duties within the confines of their homes. The disparities in educational achievements between men and women are largely due to socially constructed perceptions of gender roles, rather than biological differences. Women teachers face stress due to economic and occupational factors. Low pay and limited advancement (Makhija, Naidu & Rakesh, 2016), heavy workloads, and dual roles at home and school (Rani & Sharma, 2021) heighten fatigue. Gender roles and demographics like age and motherhood further intensify stress (Desouky & Allam, 2017).

Addressing gender disparities, increasing the number of female teachers is frequently recommended as a strategy to enhance educational outcomes for girls and women. Female teachers serve as role models and provide a sense of safety, yet the largest gender gap in enrollment occurs where the proportion of female teachers is low (World Bank, 1992, as cited in UNESCO, 2016). Many female teachers are familiar with the concepts of gender discrimination and gender equality, although some express a lack of understanding. The concept of gender equality is often interpreted in different ways. Some teachers are hesitant to acknowledge gender discrimination within their schools, while others disagree with this view. For the most part, gender inequalities are accepted as natural or normal. A few female teachers have attended gender training programs. When it comes to respect, female teachers generally feel that male teachers receive more respect from students, parents, and the broader community. However, some female teachers believe that mothers and female students prefer being taught by women. In male-dominated staff settings, female teachers sometimes feel isolated. However, due to the sensitivity of the issue, many victims choose not to report such incidents, fearing negative consequences for their careers or reputations.

Female teachers are often viewed as both role models and caretakers. Their presence helps parents feel more secure about their children's education. It is generally

believed that girls benefit more academically from having female teachers, and that female teachers' presence is essential at all levels of education to ensure equal representation of girls and to improve academic performance. The distribution of power differs significantly between socialist and capitalist societies. In socialist systems, the government and party officials determine wages, production, and the distribution of goods and services, ideally in the best interest of all members of society. However, in practice, conflicts often arise between the state and workers, who are under the state's control. In socialist societies, labor is less likely to be commodified than in capitalist societies (Shrestha, 2012). Gender stereotypes are shared beliefs about traits or behaviors linked to individuals or groups (Mateo-Orcajada et al., 2021, & OHCHR, 2013) and it reflects deep-rooted societal norms that shape perceptions, limit opportunities, and reinforce traditional gender roles.

Efforts to include women in the development process have evolved over time. The first phase, known as Women in Development (WID), aimed to integrate women into development. The second phase, Women and Development (WAD), emphasized women's contributions rather than treating them solely as beneficiaries. The third phase, Gender and Development (GAD), which emerged in the 1980s, focused on the unequal distribution of resources between men and women, driven by a gender-biased, patriarchal social structure. In addition to these development strategies, various feminist theories have emerged over time. Liberal feminists advocate for equal opportunities, enabling women to achieve higher-status jobs, while Marxist feminists examine women's subordination from a materialist perspective (Ritzer, 2000). These efforts have all sought to elevate women's issues on the global stage. This study similarly aims to highlight the situation of women employees in general, and specifically women employees in the teaching sector within wards 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality.

2.4 Empirical Review

The world is advancing rapidly, with high levels of intellectual achievement in many developed countries. Nepal, on the other hand, is undergoing significant change. The country has launched various educational initiatives to eradicate illiteracy and strengthen democracy. As a result, the involvement of women in the teaching sector has been steadily increasing across the nation. Pradhan (2017) notes that despite the rapid expansion of mass

education in Nepal, the national education system has also become a key platform for implementing various political and developmental visions of the Nepali state.

Nepal remains a developing country where concepts like privatization, liberalization, and urbanization have not yet fully taken root. Before the restoration of democracy, private industries, schools, training centers, and medical facilities were scarce. However, after the establishment of a multiparty democracy, the private sector has grown rapidly in various fields. For example, Nepal Television, which once held a monopoly, now faces competition from numerous other TV channels. Previously, Radio Nepal was the primary radio station, but today, multiple radio and FM stations have been established. Mass and print media have also expanded. Similarly, after democracy, insurance companies, finance companies, and private airlines have all flourished. Privatization of government offices and industries has also increased in recent years. The emergence of private schools, however, can be attributed to the post-democracy period.

Education plays a crucial role in development and is a right that a state must guarantee to its citizens. The importance of education is universally acknowledged, whether in developed or underdeveloped countries. The world is increasingly in need of knowledge, and investing in education is essential for better future development opportunities. Unfortunately, in Nepal, there is a prevailing ignorance about the value of education, and the country has been losing out on the potential benefits of a well-educated population. Those who do access education often face numerous flaws and challenges in the system.

Shrestha (2012) asserts that women's decision-making power can be strengthened by ensuring equal participation in planning and policy-making at all levels. This involvement should not be limited to a few women or the wives of political leaders, but rather, women and men should be equally represented in decision-making roles, in proportion to their presence in society. Bhusal (2015) explores the contributions of women in various sectors such as industry, household work, and rural markets. Women, like men, work in the unorganized sector in both poor and wealthy parts of the world. However, certain legislation, such as maternity leave, childcare facilities, and exemptions from night work, can make hiring women in the formal sector more expensive for employers. As a result, women often occupy peripheral, temporary, or part-time positions, while men are preferred for permanent, core roles. This trend persists even in wealthier countries, where

women's lack of interest in unionism is not an inherent characteristic but rather a consequence of structural issues.

Gender disparity in education is deeply rooted in economic, social, and cultural factors, making access to education more difficult for girls (Kays, 2003). Even when girls do attend school, they often face barriers to obtaining a quality education, with significant achievement gaps across different socioeconomic groups. Neupane (2017) highlights that despite progress in human civilization, women continue to encounter multiple obstacles to educational attainment, including caste/ethnicity, race, religion, disability, income, and geographic location (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016).

In Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan, the presence of female teachers plays a vital role in enhancing girls' academic achievement (Gurung, 2018). From an anthropological perspective, female teachers serve as relatable role models, particularly in traditional communities where gender norms influence educational participation. Their involvement creates a supportive and safe environment for girl students, encouraging regular attendance, participation, and confidence in the classroom. Female teachers also help challenge deep-rooted beliefs that limit girls' education, gradually shifting societal perceptions. In households where education for girls may not be prioritized, the visibility and success of female educators reinforce the value of learning and inspire both students and parents to support girls' academic pursuits.

The United Nations Development Group (2010) emphasizes that the involvement of female teachers is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to education and gender equality. From an anthropological perspective, female teachers not only serve as educators but also as role models who challenge traditional gender roles and empower girls through representation. Their presence in classrooms fosters inclusive learning environments and promotes girls' enrollment and retention in schools. In many societies, especially in rural or conservative areas, parents are more willing to send their daughters to school when female teachers are present, reflecting how cultural norms influence educational access and gender equity.

According to UNESCO (2018), 72 countries still have significant gender gaps in primary and secondary education. Of these, 63 countries (including Nepal) show a considerable gender gap in secondary education. These disparities are the result of various

barriers that ultimately hinder socioeconomic development at the national level and limit individual prosperity and well-being. Although much research has been conducted in various fields, the role of women in the teaching sector has not been extensively studied, particularly in the context of the Mulpani Rural Municipality. This study seeks to address that gap.

Conclusion

The review of literature reveals that women in the teaching profession experience multifaceted challenges. The cultural, social, and institutional factors are responsible for it. From a theoretical perspective, gender roles and societal expectations significantly influence the career paths of female teachers. It aligns with traditional caregiving roles. This realization comes with limitations, and it includes the role of ambiguity, the work-family problem, and barriers to leadership. Theoretical frameworks (Atteh et al., 2020) categorize how dual responsibilities at home and work contribute to stress the female teachers. The psychological problems and limited job satisfaction underscore the need for supportive structures to ensure professional growth and the well-being of teachers.

Empirical studies further emphasize that although women's participation in teaching has increased globally and in Nepal, structural inequalities exist there. They reinforce stereotypes that hinder equal recognition. Evidence shows that female teachers serve as role models for girls, create safer learning environments to improve educational outcomes. However, persistent disparities in facilities, workload, respect, and representation illustrate the unequal conditions under which women work.

The literature indicates that progress has been made in expanding women's access to teaching. The anthropological and sociocultural constraints remain there. Women educators are expected to balance professional commitments with domestic responsibilities. At the cost of career advancement and personal well-being, the need for structural change is significant. This review highlights the need for deeper exploration into the lived realities of women teachers in the Nepali rural context, where cultural expectations and institutional barriers continue to influence their opportunities and challenges. The insights drawn here form the foundation for the present study, which seeks to examine the situation of female teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality, Jhapa.

Chapter 3:

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design basically acts as the backbone for the entire process data collection, analysis, and the whole journey. For this particular study, the researcher chose an exploratory and descriptive approach. The socio-economic issues aim to actually understand what is going on with female employees across schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality. The female teachers are not just looking at one thing. The study covers different factors: age, education, marital status, family size, caste, where people live, what property they can access, their wages, and how long they have been in the profession. The goal is to find out a clear picture of what these women experience in their professional lives, and whether or not they're satisfied.

In terms of methodology, the text highlights mixed methods—basically, combining quantitative and qualitative research. As Creswell (2014) points out, this gives a more rounded understanding of complex research problems. Other researchers like Gay and Airasian (2000), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) have also emphasized the value of integrating both methods, so findings are stronger and more nuanced. For this study, the focus leans toward qualitative methods—think interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation. The aim is to gather firsthand accounts from teachers, administrators, and local education officials. They want to pinpoint what helps or hinders women in these schools, and use that information to suggest solutions and policy improvements. The researcher is focusing on Wards 13 and 14 within Mulpani Rural Municipality. By keeping the scope of it, the hope is to offer insights that could be useful for broader educational planning and efforts to advance gender equity in similar rural settings.

3.2 Research Philosophy

For the study, the feminist anthropological philosophy is most useful. Anthropological feminist theory critically analyzes how gender forms social roles, power dynamics, and access to opportunities in contexts of education and employment (Rosaldo

& Lamphere, 1974). Post-positivism holds that an objective reality exists; the knowledge is partial and influenced by unfairness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This concept assumes that all remarks are theory-laden and shaped by the researcher's positionality. Feminist anthropology emphasizes the context, power relations, and day-to-day experience, especially among marginalized groups like women.

Feminist anthropology analyzes traditional, patriarchal anthropological examples through women's voices and experiences. It encounters the notion of detached objective research, instead supporting reflexivity, where researchers are transparent about their biases, values, and social positions (Harding, 1987). This is naturally post-positivist in nature, and the researcher can strive for accuracy, the reading becomes the part of context and perspective. The use of structured methods such as surveys, interviews, or case studies, examine trends and experiences of female teachers to acknowledge the subjectivity in data interpretation and the social complexity of gender roles. Thus, post-positivism guides a philosophical base for merging quantitative and qualitative approaches, and feminist anthropology offers the critical analysis for identifying women's narratives.

Feminist anthropology focuses the lived experiences of women, emphasizes on how intersecting factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, and locality affect their social positioning. In the rural context of Mulpani this perspective is vital in understanding how cultural norms, patriarchal values, and systemic barriers influence women's participation in the teaching profession. It also allows the study to explore how women teachers navigate these challenges and create opportunities for themselves within and outside institutional frameworks.

Feminist philosophy gives voice to marginalized groups and aligns with the objective of an anthropological study. It seeks to capture the narratives of women educators to talk about discrimination, lack of leadership roles, and unequal workloads. It favors qualitative methodologies like ethnography, interviews, and respondent observation tools necessary for knowing subjective experiences in a culturally different setting (Harding, 1987). The study highlights individual and structural challenges and also considers

women's agency and resilience in overcoming barriers. It intends to generate insights to inform policy changes to support gender equity in educational sector.

3.3 Universe and Sampling

The study surveyed women teachers from various schools located in Wards 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality. A total of 71 female teachers from both community and institutional (private) schools were selected as respondents. Due to limitations in time and budget, the study focused on a sample of 71 teachers from 10 schools in the area. Of these, 8 were community schools and 2 were institutional schools. The schools were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring representation across the entire study area. Within the selected schools, random sampling was employed to identify participants, allowing for a mix of teachers from institutions of varying sizes and characteristics (DeWalt, & DeWalt, 2011).

This approach ensured diversity in the data, capturing experiences from both larger and smaller schools. To maintain the reliability and relevance of the data, any teacher with less than one week of teaching experience was excluded and replaced by another female teacher from the same school who had at least six months of teaching experience. This helped ensure that participants had adequate exposure to the teaching profession to provide informed responses. The study design thus balances practical constraints with methodological rigor to capture meaningful insights.

Mulpani Rural Municipality has only 5 wards. Out of these 5 wards, the researcher has selected 13 and 14 only, which cover 40% of the local units of this municipality. The researcher intended to select 11 and 13 wards in order to study the condition of women teachers from an anthropological perspective. The 5 wards have only limited schools. Thus, the researcher opted to study in 13 and 14 wards. Many women teachers are working in community schools, and their observations are different. In addition, in order to know the perspective of women teachers in private schools, the researcher selected the private schools as well.

This is a census. The researcher has covered 10 schools out of 13 schools established in 13 and 14 wards.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

The data and the information were quantitative and were collected from primary sources. The 13 schools of Mulpani Rural Municipality are the main sources based on primary data. 8 schools from ward 13 and 14 schools from ward no. 13 are selected for the study. The Primary data were collected directly from questionnaires.

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

For this study, data and necessary information were collected through individual questionnaires, focusing on the women's status in the teaching profession in selected schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality wards 13 and 14: an anthropological study. The questionnaire were designed to gather anthropological characteristics of the respondents. Primary data is collected using structured questionnaires, which is distributed to the respondents, who are asked to complete the set of questions.

- a. Closed questionnaire: Closed questionnaire the gap between rigid relational databases and unstructured content like text or media by offering flexible organization structured enough for analysis, yet adaptable to diverse formats and evolving data needs (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). 71 closed questionnaire were done for the analysis.
- b. Interview: In qualitative research, interviews are essential for collecting detailed, nuanced insights into people's experiences, perspectives, and opinions. Here, both male and female teachers are interviewed to understand their perceptions about the teaching profession (Kvale, 2007). They are especially useful for exploring complex issues, capturing individual narratives, and uncovering rich, contextual information that cannot be effectively measured through quantitative methods alone. Total 5 wada were selected for interview list.
- c. Participant observation: Participant observation is a qualitative method where the researcher engages in and observes daily group activities, offers deep insight into social contexts, cultural practices, and human experiences through immersive involvement (DeWalt, & DeWalt, 2011). In this case, the researcher has spent time

in research area for observing the activities of teachers. I have done the participation observation in total of 11 schools.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

First of all, required letter is taken from the college and submitted to Mulpani Rural Municipality wards 13 and 14. After certifying the letter from there with the cooperation of key person, details of the schools under the study area was taken. After getting details about the schools, researcher has gone for field study research to select the sample schools.

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

A huge mass of data is collected during the study. To handle it conveniently collected raw data were first processed in a computer. Quantitative data are analyzed with the appropriate statistical tools accordingly. Simple Statistical tools like pie chart, table, and graphs are used for data analysis.

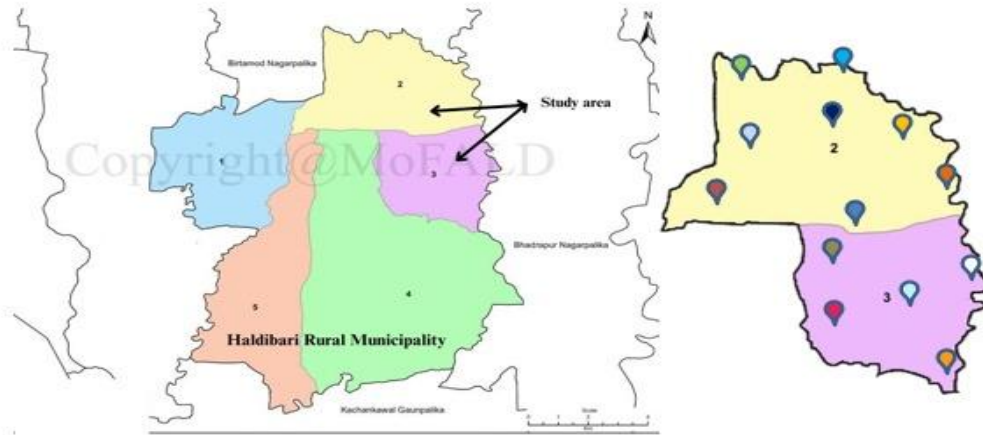
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Chapter 4

Study Area

4.1 Introduction

There are seven Rural Municipalities in Jhapa District. Mulpani is one of the Rural Municipalities located in Jhapa District of Koshi Province of Nepal. There are a total of 15 municipalities in Jhapa in which 8 are at urban area and 7 are rural area. This following figure shows the map of Mulpani Rural Municipality, study area (Wards 13 and 14) and the schools listed in the study area.



Ward No. 2

S.N	Name of Schools	Symbols
1	Nawa Sirjana Aa.Bi	
2	Janat Aa.Bi	
3	Rastriya Yekata Aa.Bi	
4	Sarswati Aa.Bi	
5	Haldibari Ma. Bi	
6	Canary Academy	
7	Sigma School	
8	Jasodha English Boarding School	

Ward No. 3

S.N	Name of Schools	Symbols
1	Rameswar Aa.Bi	
2	Laxmi Ma.Bi	
3	Panchhayat Ma. Bi	
4	Children Garden English Secondary School	
5	Oracal Academy	

Figure 2: Mulpani Rural Municipality, study area & name of schools

According to the latest restructuring by the Government of Nepal in 2016 (2073 B.S.), the former Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Goldhap, Haldibari, and Jalthal were merged to form the Mulpani Rural Municipality. Geographically, it is bordered by Kachankawal Rural Municipality to the south, Bhadrapur Municipality to the east, Birtamod Municipality to the north, and Bahradashi Rural Municipality to the west. Fulfilling the requirement of the new Constitution of Nepal 2015, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development replaced all old VDCs and Municipalities into 753 new local level body (Municipality).

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, the study area has an area of 117.34 square kilometers (45.31 sq mi) and the total population of the municipality is 29,223 as of Census of Nepal 2011. Mulpani Rural Municipality is located in the southeastern part of Jhapa District. The Mulpani Rural Municipality is divided into total 5 wards and the Headquarter of this newly formed Rural Municipality is situated in Jalthal. This study has collected the data from the schools located in wards 13 and 14. According to the 2021 census (2078 B.S.), the total population is 32,722, comprising 7,878 households. Among them, there are 17,111 females and 15,611 males.

The rural municipality is divided into 5 wards. In the west lies Goldhap (Ward No. 1), the northern part includes Mulpani (Ward No. 13), the southeastern part consists of Dhadhuwa and Badabari (Wards No. 3 and 4), and in the south lies Kanchanshree (Ward No. 11), where the rural municipality's office is also located near the historic site Dhanushpokhari. This rural municipality is home to people of various ethnicities, religions, and communities. Most of the population is engaged in agriculture, while a smaller portion is involved in trade and business. There are a total of 17 community schools and 12 institutional schools. Schools in Nepal are opened to uphold the constitutional right to education for all children and to promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

The education system in Nepal serves as a foundation for social cohesion, human capital development, and the nation's overall progress, including economic growth and achieving global commitments like the Millennium Development Goals and Education for

All. Education equips Nepal’s growing working-age population with necessary skills, harnessing the demographic dividend for national development. It also plays a vital role in fostering values of diversity and inclusion, as envisioned in the constitution, while helping reduce social and economic inequalities by offering equal opportunities regardless of background. The federal government supports education through initiatives like the School Sector Development Plan, which enhances teacher quality, curriculum, and school management. Additionally, Community Learning Centers provide lifelong learning, especially empowering women and communities. Post-COVID, a school reopening framework was introduced to balance safety with learning continuity. These efforts collectively highlight that opening schools in Nepal goes beyond basic education—it is a strategic approach to empower individuals, strengthen society, and fulfill both national and international responsibilities. By investing in education, Nepal aims to build a more just, skilled, and forward-looking society prepared for future challenges and opportunities.

These schools provide accessible education to children in the area. The Mulpani Basic Hospital, currently operating temporarily on the office premises, provides basic healthcare services. In addition, there are 3 health posts and 2 basic health centers serving the local population. However, there are very few cottage and small-scale industries in the municipality. In Wards 11, 13, and 14, south of the Hulaki Highway, lies the Jalthal Char Kose Forest, one of the richest areas in South Asia in terms of biodiversity. The under-construction Martyrs' Memorial Democratic Park (Sahid Smriti Loktantrik Park) in Bhelagadhi, Ward No. 2, shows great potential for tourism development in the region.

Nepal Education Sector Analysis (2017) published by the Global Partnership for Education offers a strategic and contextual examination of Nepal’s education landscape and reform trajectory. Central to the analysis is the implementation of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) spanning July 2016 to July 2022, which aligns education reforms with Nepal’s 2015 Constitution and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as its national ambition to graduate from least-developed-country (LDC) status. Several key drivers underpin the urgency for comprehensive education reform. First, Nepal faced major disasters and conflict-related disruptions, which severely weakened educational

infrastructure and exacerbated the challenge of keeping children in school—making the restoration of resilient, inclusive schools a humanitarian and developmental imperative. Second, the country’s anticipated demographic dividend, projected to peak around 2025, places a premium on equipping youth over 60 percent of whom had not completed secondary education by 2011 with the skills necessary to participate productively in the economy. Lastly, transitioning out of LDC status has added pressure to bolster the Human Assets Index through improved literacy and secondary completion rates, and to produce a capable workforce to drive socio-economic transformation.

The big problems in Nepal’s education scene are not exactly a mystery. Old school buildings, unfair differences between regional facilities, teachers who are either in the wrong place or not up to scratch, a messy governance issues are the fundamental problems. The SSDP’s got good intentions: better curriculum, more teachers, and tighter monitoring. None of it means squat unless people actually pull it off, and the money and leadership do not vanish along the way. Nepal’s got a shot to flip these challenges into something positive. Rebuilding stronger schools, making sure kids in all corners have fair facilities and not just turning out students can actually solve the problems. That is the way to getting out of LDC status and hitting those lofty development targets everyone keeps talking about.

Chapter 5

Data presentation

Every field research is a logical study on any specific title. It generates new knowledge and addresses existing problems. The major part of the study is data analysis to enhance the accuracy and reliability of study. It includes the data collection, grouping the data, transformation of information to develop meaningful insights. Without data analysis, finding logical and evidence-based conclusions would be difficult. This study has made an essential element of any research effort (Alem, 2020). Data analysis has been conducted using qualitative or quantitative methods and they offer distinctive advantages. The researcher has used numerical tools such as graphs, charts, statistics, and mathematical models to interpret data for qualitative analysis. For qualitative analysis, the researcher has adopted descriptive formats like interviews, focus groups discussion, and open-ended questionnaires to understand behaviors, experiences, or opinions of female teachers teaching in research area.

5.1 Demography of Data

The data analysis process supports researchers break down complex issues into manageable parts. The data study and analysis form the base for making informed decisions, responding research questions, and evolving structured research proposals. Ultimately, the perception achieved through both qualitative and quantitative analysis offers a clearer, and comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This study has used 26 questionnaires to identify the anthropological aspects of female teachers teaching in schools situated in wards 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality, Jhapa. The questionnaires are arranged to focus on key areas that outline teachers' lives and experiences. This structured approach aids in deeper, data-driven analysis. In this research, there are included into six different parts. The first part deals with demographic information and it has six questionnaires. The second part has five questionnaires is about cultural and social factors. The third section incorporates four questionnaires to deal with economic and occupational. The next section has three questionnaires to talk about work-life balance. The next section is institutional and workplace environment and has three questionnaires. The final section has five questions deals with psychological and career growth.

Table 1: Demographic Categories -1

Demographic Categories		Frequency	Present
Age groups	Below-25	2	2.81
	25-35	30	42.25
	35-45	21	29.58
	45 above	18	25.36
	Total	71	100
Caste	Brahmin	38	53.52
	Chhetri	15	21.12
	Dasnami	5	7.04
	Newar	2	2.82
	Janajati	9	12.68
	Madhesi	2	2.82
	Total	71	100
	Hindu	61	85.92
	Buddhist	1	1.4
	Kirata	8	11.28
	Christian	1	1.4
Religion	Total	71	100
	Single	9	12.68
	Married	61	85.92
	Divorce/ Living separately	0	0
	Widowed	1	1.4
Marital status	Total	71	100
	SLC/SEE	3	4.22
	INT./ +2	24	33.81
	Bachelors	27	38.02
	Master Degree	17	23.95
Qualification	Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

Table 1 summarizes the demographic distribution of 71 individuals by age, caste, religion, marital status, and educational qualification. From an anthropological perspective, the data reflect a predominantly Hindu, Brahmin-majority population with strong markers of social stratification. Over 53% identify as Brahmin, indicating upper-caste dominance, while marginalized groups like Janajatis and Madhesis are less represented. The prevalence of Hinduism (85.92%) underscores the cultural and religious homogeneity typical of high-caste groups in Nepal. The age distribution shows most individuals (71.83%) are between 25 and 45, aligning with peak social and economic activity phases, often linked to marriage and career development, evident in the high marriage rate (85.92%). Educational levels are relatively high, with 61.97% holding at least a bachelor's degree, suggesting access to resources and opportunities.

The caste, religion, and education patterns point toward a socially cohesive, possibly urbanized group, with traditional norms still shaping marital and cultural identity. This demographic snapshot reflects the intersection of caste hierarchy, religious influence, and modern education in shaping Nepalese social structure. From the perspective of anthropological explanation, the data reflect a socially stable, educated, and marriage-oriented population, primarily in their productive years. It suggests cultural emphasis on education, family structure, and adult societal roles.

Table 2: Demographic categories -2

Demographic Categories		Frequency	Present
of	Community	44	61.98
	Government by Private	26	36.62
Types	Other	1	1.4
	Total	71	100
Teaching experience	less than 5 years	15	21.127
	5-10 years	23	32.39
	11-20 years	17	23.95
	More than 20 years	16	22.53
	Total	71	100
	Below 1 class	16	22.53
	1-5 classes	25	35.21
Teaching level	5-8 classes	19	26.77
	9-12 classes	11	15.49
	Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

Table 2 reflects the educational workforce structure within a culturally embedded schooling system. A majority (61.98%) work in community schools, indicating state-supported institution's centrality in local education. The presence of government by private schools (36.62%) suggests a hybrid model shaped by evolving socioeconomic demands. Teaching experience is diverse, with a balanced distribution across all experience levels, highlighting both generational continuity and institutional knowledge transfer. Most teachers (35.21%) serve in early grades (1–5), which anthropologically emphasizes foundational education's role in social reproduction and value transmission.

The stratification of teaching levels also reflects broader societal norms about age, authority, and knowledge hierarchy in education. Overall, the data illustrate how teaching roles and school types are shaped by historical, social, and economic forces in Nepalese society. From an anthropological view, this data reflects how education sustains cultural continuity, where community schools function as agents of socialization, identity

formation, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and reinforcement of societal values and hierarchies.

5.2 Cultural and Social Factors

In the local context of Nepal, cultural and social factors deeply influence how female teachers are perceived and supported. From an anthropological perspective, teaching is often seen as a socially acceptable role for women because it aligns with traditional expectations of nurturing and caregiving. Families, as central units in Nepali society, play a crucial role in shaping women's career choices, and their support is often decisive. Although many communities now recognize women teachers as equally capable as men, lingering gender stereotypes still affect how some students and parents view them.

Female teachers have to balance responsibilities in both domains such as at home and work place. It makes them to strain and tension, resulting in difficulties maintaining a stable work-life (Addi-Racah, 2006, Booth, 2005, Barmao & Mukwana, 2013, and Mollel & Tshabangu, 2014). Both job-related and individual pressures are closely linked to cultural conflicts that emerge between professional and personal roles, which can, in turn, have negative consequences in the family. Cultural beliefs continue to influence career decisions, especially in rural areas, where traditional norms remain strong. Overall, female teachers navigate a space where cultural acceptance coexists in Mulpani Rural Municipality of Jhapa with subtle barriers shaped by social expectations.

Table 3: Culture and social factors in teaching profession

Family support for the profession	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Supportive	63	88.73
Somewhat Supportive	7	9.86
Neutral	1	1.41
Not Supportive	0	0
Total	71	100
Cultural beliefs impact women's career choices in teaching	Frequency	Percent
Yes, significantly	22	30.99
Somewhat	27	38.02
Not much	10	14.08
No impact	12	16.91
Total	71	100
Perceiving female teachers by students and parents	Frequency	Percent
Equally competent	49	69.01
More respect than male teachers	8	11.27
Less respect than male teachers	10	14.08
No opinion	4	5.64
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

From an anthropological perspective, Table 3 deals with cultural and social factors that significantly shape women's careers, particularly in teaching. The data reveal that family support plays a pivotal role in enabling women to enter and remain in the teaching profession. 88.73% of respondents reported strong familial support. This underscores the importance of kinship systems and familial roles in decision-making, especially in societies where collective family interests often guide individual choices.

Moreover, 69.01% of respondents felt that female teachers are perceived as equally competent by students and parents, indicating a shift toward gender equality in professional respect. However, the presence of 14.08% reporting less respect for female teachers reveals that gender norms and stereotypes still influence perceptions. Cultural beliefs also remain

impactful, with nearly 69% of respondents acknowledging at least some influence of cultural norms on women's career decisions. This aligns with anthropological understandings of how gender ideologies embedded in social structures and belief systems shape occupational roles.

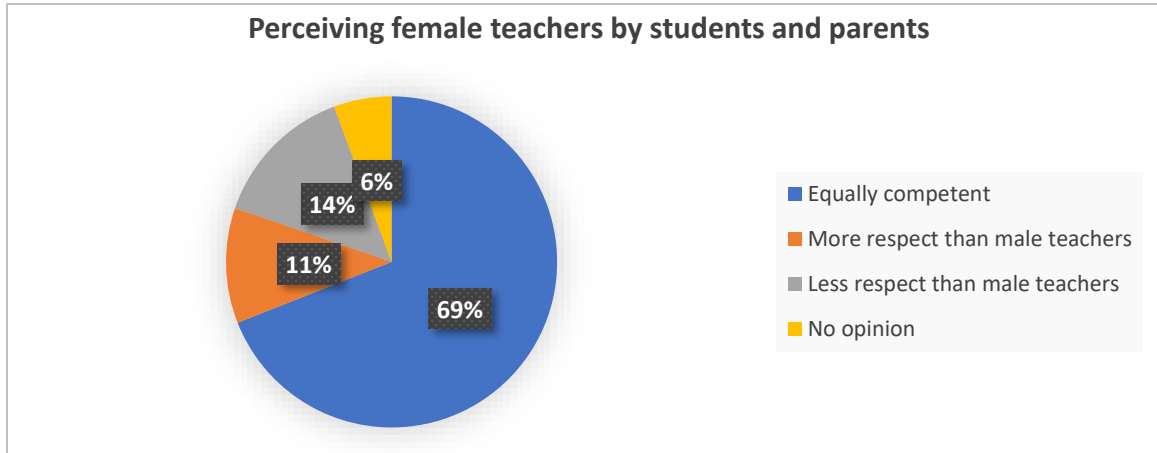


Figure 3: Field study:22 May 2025

This pie chart indicates how parents and students perceive female teachers in schools and classrooms. These findings reflect how teaching, often viewed as an extension of traditional female roles like caregiving, is socially acceptable and even encouraged. Thus, while progress is evident, deeply rooted cultural constructs continue to mediate women's professional choices, revealing the complex interplay of culture, gender, and social expectations.

Table 4: Cultural/Societal restrictions and gender stereotypes

Cultural/Societal restrictions in your teaching profession	Frequency	Percent
Yes, frequently	8	11.27
Yes, occasionally	4	5.63
Rarely	16	22.53
No, never	43	60.57
Total	71	100
Gender stereotypes	Frequency	Percent
Yes, to a great extent	5	7.04
Yes, to some extent	10	14.08
Rarely	16	22.54
No, not at all	40	56.34
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

From an anthropological perspective, Table 4 highlights how cultural and societal norms continue to shape the professional lives of female teachers in wards 13 and 14 of Mulpani Rural Municipality, Jhapa district. Although 60.57% of respondents reported that they are never experiencing restrictions, 11.27% face them frequently, and 5.63% occasionally indicating that traditional values still influence some teaching environments. Additionally, 22.53% reported rare restrictions, showing that such challenges, though diminishing, are not entirely absent. Regarding gender stereotypes, 56.34% reported not facing any, yet 7.04% experienced them to a great extent, and 14.08% to some extent. The remaining 22.54% encountered them rarely.

Gender stereotypes are shared beliefs about traits or behaviors linked to individuals or groups (Mateo-Orcajada et al., 2021). Gender stereotyping, as defined by OHCHR (2013), involves assigning specific roles or characteristics to someone solely based on being male or female, reflecting deep-rooted societal norms that shape perceptions, limit opportunities, and reinforce traditional gender roles.



Figure 4: Cultural/Societal and gender stereotypes (Source: Field study:22 May 2025)

These figures reflect a society in transition, where modern ideals promoting gender equality are gaining traction, but deep-seated patriarchal beliefs continue to shape everyday experiences. Anthropologically, this data underscores the tension between evolving gender norms and long-standing cultural frameworks, demonstrating how women’s roles in public spaces like schools are still negotiated through complex layers of tradition, identity, and social expectation.

5.3 Economic and Occupational Factors

Occupational and economic factors significantly shape stress experienced by women teachers. Economically, lower pay and limited advancement opportunities—despite comparable qualifications undermine financial stability and job satisfaction, fueling stress (Makhija, Naidu & Rakesh, 2016). Occupationally, women often face heavy workloads, overcrowded classrooms, and dual responsibilities at work and home, the “double shift” resulting in fatigue and reduced well-being (Rani, Sharma, 2021). Additionally, gender norms and domestic duties exacerbate work–life conflict, increasing anxiety and psychological strain.

Table 5: Economic and occupational of women teachers

Satisfaction with income as a teacher	Frequency	Percent
Very Satisfied	8	11.26
Somewhat satisfied	29	40.85
Neutral	12	16.91
Not Satisfied	22	30.98
Total	71	100
There is a gender-based facility in teaching.	Frequency	Percent
Yes, significantly	3	4.22
Yes, but not much	44	61.98
No, salaries are equal	24	33.8
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

The above Table 5 shows the issues from an anthropological perspective. Women teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality reflect both cultural and structural dynamics in their profession. While 52.11% report being very or somewhat satisfied with their income, nearly 31% are not satisfied highlighting economic limitations in teaching roles. Culturally, 66.2% acknowledge gender-based disparities, though often subtle, revealing persistent norms that shape women's work experiences. These figures suggest that while formal equality may exist, informal cultural expectations and gender roles continue to influence satisfaction and opportunities.

Demographic variables like marital status, age, and parenthood further influence stress levels, with mothers and older teachers often reporting higher strain Desouky. Allam (2017). These intertwined economic and occupational forces create systemic stressors for women educators. Occupational stress of the women teachers working in schools predispose to anxiety. No study is done to assess these problems among teachers in Jhapa and here only it is intended to know the reality of economic and occupational factors.

Table 6: Obstacles in promotion and financial independence

Faced any obstacles in getting promotion at workplace	Frequency	Percent
Yes, due to gender bias	2	2.82
Yes, due to other reasons	15	21.12
No, obstacles	50	70.42
Not, applicable	4	5.64
Total	71	100
Feel financially independent through your profession	Frequency	Percent
Yes, completely	23	32.4
Somewhat, independent	25	35.21
No, I rely on other sources	18	25.35
Not Sure	5	7.04
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

According to the data from Table 6, 70.42% of women teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality reported no obstacles to promotion, while 2.82% faced gender bias and 21.12% faced other barriers. Regarding financial independence, 32.4% felt completely independent, 35.21% somewhat independent, while 25.35% relied on other sources. A smaller group (7.04%) were unsure. These findings suggest that while most women do not face explicit promotional barriers, and their financial independence reflect broader socio-economic and gendered constraints in rural teaching professions.

5.4 Balance of Work-House Life

Achieving a balance between work and home life is vital for women teachers, who often manage both professional duties and household responsibilities. It focuses on school teachers, revealing that while many succeed in balancing roles, others face challenges like long working hours, limited institutional support, and stress-related health issues.

Table 7: Balance of time in teaching and household activities

Balance of work & family activities	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	7	9.86
Somewhat easy	43	60.56
Difficult	19	26.76
Very difficult	2	2.82
Total	71	99.98
Teaching job allows time for household works	Frequency	Percent
Yes, completely	14	19.72
Yes, but with difficulty	34	47.88
No, I struggle to manage time	21	29.57
No, I have to rely on other	2	2.828
Total	71	99.97
Biggest challenge in balancing work and home life		
Time constraints	53	74.65
Lack of family support	5	7.04
Workplace pressure	6	8.45
None	7	9.86
Total	71	99.98

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

Table 7 shows that in Mulpani, balancing teaching responsibilities with household duties presents a mixed experience for women teachers. While 60.56% find it somewhat easy to manage both roles, 29.58% struggle or rely on others. Only 19.72% feel their job allows ample time for household work, whereas nearly half (47.88%) manage with difficulty. The most significant challenge identified is time constraints, affecting 74.65% of respondents. A smaller percentage cited workplace pressure (8.45%) and lack of family support (7.04%).

Key motivators include job autonomy and recognition, while areas needing improvement are better pay and caregiving assistance (Kaviya, Mohana, & Lakshmi, 2025). Addressing these factors through targeted policies and support systems is crucial for enhancing the overall well-being and effectiveness of women teachers. The following

chart shows about balancing work and household activities by female teachers.

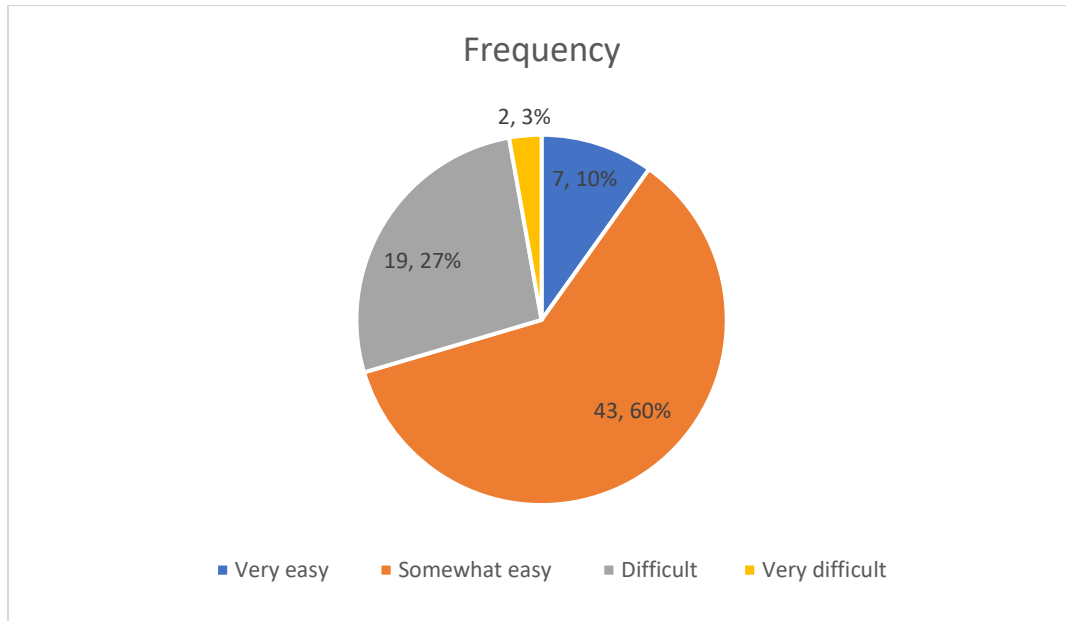


Figure 5: Balancing time in teaching and household activities (Source: Field study:22 May 2025)

These findings highlight that although many women can balance their duties, a substantial number still face considerable pressure due to limited time and inadequate support systems. Tailored interventions and institutional flexibility could improve their work-life integration and overall well-being in this rural teaching context.

5.5 Institutional and Workplace Environment

Women teachers' institutional and workplace environments are shaped by organizational culture, support systems, and institutional policies. In the school education system, autonomy, involvement, and supportive climates enhance women's work-life balance and bolster self-efficacy (Giauque et al. 2022). However, rigid expectations, unpredictable hours, and traditional gender norms can marginalize those utilizing formal policies (Koehler, 2016; Chandra, 2012). Effective intelligence training and strong leadership further strengthen positive work environments by enhancing satisfaction among female teachers. Overall, when institutions implement flexible arrangements, mentorship, and welfare initiatives, women teachers experience greater well-being, career progression, and a healthier balance between professional and personal realms.

Table 8: Institutional environment for women teachers

Faced discrimination at your workplace	Frequency	Percent
Yes, frequently	1	1.4
Yes, sometimes	10	14.09
No, rarely	10	14.09
No, sure	50	70.42
Total	71	100
Any policies in your institution to promote gender equality	Frequency	Percent
Yes, they are effective	21	29.59
Yes, but they are not properly implemented	15	21.12
No, such polices do not exist	20	28.17
Not Sure	15	21.12
Total	71	100
Do you feel safe in your workplace	Frequency	Percent
Yes, always	62	87.33
yes, most of the time	5	7.05
No, sometimes I feel unsafe	3	4.22
No, I often feel unsafe	1	1.4
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

In Mulpani Wards 13 and 14, the institutional environment for women teachers reflects deeper anthropological patterns shaped by social norms, gender roles, and community dynamics. While 87.33% of teachers report feeling safe at work, and only 1.4% experience frequent discrimination, subtle forms of bias persist 14.09% report occasional discrimination. Gender equality policies exist in some schools, but only 29.59% find them effective, while 28.17% say such policies are absent. These statistics reflect the coexistence of progressive institutional efforts and traditional gendered expectations in rural Nepal. From an anthropological perspective, women teachers often navigate dual identities professionals within structured institutions and caregivers within culturally defined domestic roles. The ambiguity around policy implementation (21.12% unsure) and reliance on informal workplace dynamics highlight the need for stronger institutional

accountability. Addressing these gaps requires culturally sensitive reforms that not only introduce policies but also challenge ingrained norms to foster a more equitable and supportive environment.

5.6 Psychological and Career Growth Aspects

Female teachers in schools experience a complex psychological and career growth. They have multiple responsibilities like professional responsibilities, societal expectations and households' burden. Their experiences have revealed that significant insights into these dimensions. The burden of teaching and family responsibilities is a source of psychological ongoing stress, emotional exhaustion and physical tiredness. The study highlights that when women work beyond regular hours, particularly in low-income family background, the psychological problems strain intensify and creates a problem in career. It often results in emotional burnout and anxiety. The challenges of harmonizing teaching duties with household tasks affect their well-being and o their ability to maintain consistent professional performance. Engagement in teaching positively contributes to family stability and economic uplift, especially in lower-income contexts. Their employment reduces family risk and supports family welfare.

The career advancement is frequently obstructed by structural and organizational difficulties. Without getting supportive family-friendly policies, female teachers only struggle and get no progress in teaching profession. In the absence of considerable working management and societal prospects about gender roles creates their difficulty in teaching profession. It seeks leadership roles or additional training to support the female teachers. To strengthen both psychological health and career growth, the leadership of schools should recommend the implementation of family-friendly workplace policies. It creates favorable and flexible environment, counseling services, and mental health support. These interventions are necessary to manage stress. The school administrative team should work with them to achieve work–life balance, and unlock their potential within the educational profession.

Table 9: Career progression and professional role as a teacher

Satisfied with career progression	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	25	35.21
Somewhat satisfied	32	45.07
Neutral	9	12.68
Not satisfied	5	7.04
Total	71	100
Confident in profession as a teacher	Frequency	Percent
Yes, very confident	68	95.78
Somewhat confident	3	4.22
Neutral	0	0
No, not confident	0	0
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

The Table 9 shows that the data on female teachers' insights on their career progression and confidence. It has given insights about their professional role. Out of 71 teachers, 35.21% have reported being very satisfied with their career progress. The majority 45.07% felt somewhat satisfied. Only a smaller group (12.68%) persisted neutral, and 7.04% were not satisfied with their professional progress. These insights suggest that most of teachers assume their career trajectory is positive, and only a small portion still experiences some level of dissatisfaction or uncertainty about teaching profession.

In terms of professional confidence, the results are overwhelmingly positive. A significant 95.78% of the teachers expressed being very confident in their role as educators, with the remaining 4.22% being somewhat confident. Importantly, none of the respondents reported feeling neutral or not confident. This indicates strong professional identity and self-assurance among female teachers, even if career advancement opportunities vary. Overall, the data highlights a generally positive outlook on professional identity, though it also signals the need for enhanced support and structured growth opportunities to address the concerns of those less satisfied with their career progression.

Table 10: Government, and teaching profession

Challenge in teaching profession	Frequency	Percent
Workplace Discrimination	1	1.4
Work life Balance	59	83.1
Limited Opportunities for promotion	11	15.5
Gender pay gap	0	0
Total	71	100
Government is supporting women teachers	Frequency	Percent
Yes, absolutely	16	22.53
Yes, but improvement are needed	38	53.52
No not much is being done	10	14.09
No, there is no support	7	9.86
Total	71	100
Future of teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality	Frequency	Percent
More opportunities and important	37	52.12
No, Significant change	17	23.94
More Challenges and difficulties	13	18.3
Unsure	4	5.64
Total	71	100

Source: Field study:22 May 2025

The table 10 outlines key challenges faced by female teachers and their perceptions of government support in Mulpani Rural Municipality. A significant 83.1% identified work-life balance as the major challenge in the teaching profession, while 15.5% cited limited opportunities for promotion. Workplace discrimination was mentioned by only 1.4%, and none reported a gender pay gap, suggesting salary equity is not a major concern.

When asked about government support, over half (53.52%) acknowledged that while support exists, improvements are needed. Only 22.53% felt fully supported, whereas 14.09% believed not much is being done, and 9.86% felt there is no support at all. These figures indicate a general perception that government efforts are present but insufficient. Regarding the future outlook for teachers, 52.12% were optimistic, expecting more opportunities and improvements. However, 23.94% saw no significant change, and 18.3%

anticipated more challenges and difficulties. A small portion (5.64%) remained unsure. Overall, while there is optimism about progress, concerns about support and work conditions persist.

Chapter 6:

Opportunities and Challenges of Women in the Teaching Profession

The teaching profession has long been considered a favorable career for women, particularly in rural and developing areas, where its perceived alignment with traditional gender roles allows women to participate in the workforce while managing household responsibilities (Isave, 2016). This study, based on data from selected schools in Mulpani Rural Municipality (Wards 13 and 14), offers valuable insights into both the opportunities and challenges that women face in this profession. The findings help to form a holistic view of how cultural, economic, institutional, and personal factors shape the lived realities of female teachers in rural Nepal. Atteh et al. (2020) established a conceptual framework to exemplify how work–family conflict affects female teachers’ job satisfaction. They need mediation by individual, institutional leadership, and family-related factors. The model suggests that when teaching and domestic roles overlap, the psychological strain increases. It leads to stress, burnout, and can diminish in job satisfaction.

The framework proposes that in order to improve supporting systems to the teacher at the individual, family, and organizational levels is necessary. The school leaderships can manage work–family encounter and support for teachers’ satisfaction. It highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to teacher well-being, beyond isolated stress-reduction strategies.

In the course of the discussion, the study highlights female teachers’ views on professional competencies, challenges, and opportunities for development from anthropological perspective. Participants emphasized that key teaching competencies include strong communication, motivation, and love for children, patience, creativity, curiosity, and a humanistic and empathetic approach. In terms of occupational skills, teachers noted the importance of staying current with technology, personal development, academic knowledge, effective knowledge transfer, psychological resilience, teamwork, classroom management, and being innovative and flexible. However, several obstacles hinder development, such as meaningless implementations, injustice, poor-quality training, economic constraints, ineffective school leadership, and overcrowded classrooms. Growth opportunities include international exposure, connecting with innovative peers, enhancing

digital skills, improving work conditions, contributing more to students, and gaining diverse personal and professional experiences.

Phul maya Sharma head teacher of Rameshwar Primary (Basic school) of Ward No. 14 expresses that there is a different perspective when it comes to viewing men and women in every field. Even in the teaching profession, traditional societal attitudes create certain distinctions between male and female teachers. This school has only female teachers and 138 students are studying there. She observes as:

Patriarchal thinking persists among women themselves. Society often questions whether women are capable of working. Many women also believe that good work can only happen if a man, even one less competent than themselves, is in the leadership position. Because of this mindset, women tend to lag behind in many sectors. In Rameshwar Primary School, where I am in a leadership role, all the teachers and staff members are women. After the school had remained closed for some time, I was assigned here. We personally visited homes and held consultations with parents, and successfully resumed full school operations. Currently, we have 138 students. Although we do not have any male teachers, our school is not weaker than those with male teachers. By nature, female teachers tend to face more problems than their male counterparts. Gender itself brings additional challenges for women in the teaching profession. However, in terms of work efficiency and working style, there is not much difference between male and female teachers. (Source: interview 22 may 2025)

Here is the perception of Mamata Rajbamsi, an indigenous group from the study area. She is a teacher from Mulpani Secondary School. Her opinion is they sometimes have to face certain issues with students. Occasionally, they also have to deal with guardians. During such times, the head teacher has given them the authority to make decisions related to respective issues. When it comes to matters involving teachers, they receive full support and cooperation from the school. Her observation

Looking at it purely as a profession, I am satisfied. But when comparing it with other professions, I feel somewhat dissatisfied. Although I have not achieved complete satisfaction, I am still content with what I have so far. I have been able to manage household responsibilities and still make time for school duties. As a female teacher, one issue I faced was maternity leave. First there was a provision of pregnant leave for 60 days, and now it

has been 98 days. But sometimes it is hard to get the full leave approved, so we have to adjust. Some male teachers have mentioned challenges when their wives or daughters-in-law are teachers, which reflects societal attitudes we still need to address. For those whose homes are far from school, it's even more difficult. Managing family responsibilities alongside teaching is definitely challenging. (Source: interview 22 May 2025)

Sarita Uppadhaya is another teacher teaching in Haldibari. She expresses that teaching is an opportunity for women. Since women can easily connect with young children, and the female teachers feel that this profession offers more opportunities than challenges for women. Naturally, there may be differences in roles between male and female teachers. However, they have not experienced any gender bias in a way that would be concerning. Her expression is:

Certainly, time management can be difficult. But with strong willpower, it is possible to handle family, social, and professional responsibilities. When children are young, it is especially hard for all women to manage time, but if there is determination, it can be done. I am very satisfied. I take pride in my profession. While I am content, there are some comparative dissatisfactions. The government should update policies and services over time to make the teaching profession more attractive. Of course, there are challenges in the teaching profession. However, in today's era of modern technology, not being able to adapt is a weakness and a challenge for women. If we face challenges head-on, build our capacity, and have family support, nothing is impossible. We must view challenges as opportunities. Many female teachers have become principals and are doing an excellent job. The younger generation should learn from them and move forward. (Source: interview 23 May 2025)

Sneha Sharma expresses her observation in an open manner. Teaching is an opportunity for female. Since they need to prepare in advance to teach, it also helps develop their own study habits. As it is an intellectual profession, she feels it is a valuable and meaningful job. Since she is unmarried, she has been able to carry out her teaching duties quite comfortably. At home, when they hear I am working in teaching, the family and

society regard it positively. There's nothing particularly difficult at school either. Here, teachers are all treated her equally.

I have no any problems at school. No, there is no bias of any kind here. Everything is equal. When it comes to female teachers, often in male-dominated settings, women do not voice their opinions. They need to learn to speak up and face situations. Many women hesitate to express themselves. The challenge is to build self-confidence. This challenge should be turned into an opportunity to create their own space. I am satisfied teaching. (Source: interview 23 May 2025)

Jamuna Kumari Jha is a teacher teaching in study are. She is from Madhesi community. She understands the teaching profession as a convenient job for women—one that can be done while also managing household chores in the morning and evening. She has not noticed any discrimination between male and female teachers in the school. It is definitely challenging for women to manage their time. She spends time outside of school hours fulfilling family and social responsibilities. Managing time according to circumstances is always a challenge, but we must face those challenges and find opportunities within them.

We are paid only NPR 18,500. That is not enough to run a household. The salary and benefits should be at least NPR 30,000 or more. Students can present challenges as well. Sometimes we don't fully understand them. Students come from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, so understanding their psychology and teaching accordingly is an opportunity. However, due to poor management, the lack of sufficient educational materials becomes a major challenge for us. For women, there are more problems than opportunities in the teaching profession. Women must fulfill responsibilities toward their families and society while also doing their job. Despite this, the government does not provide adequate benefits to teachers. Many of us work far from home, and the maternity leave period is still insufficient. These are just a few among many challenges we face. (Source: interview; Field Study 22 May 2025)

Manish Kumar head teacher from Bash Bari Secondary school, a member from indigenous community has observed in this way. At Bash Bari Secondary School, there are 49 teachers, among whom 15 are women. When appointing teachers from internal resources, they have prioritized women. Initially, there were only one or two female teachers. Since he became head teacher in 2016 AD., he began prioritizing women for vacant positions. Even when appointments were made based on recommendations from the Teachers Service Commission, we prioritized female candidates. In terms of teaching, there is not much difference between male and female teachers. He has found female teachers to be responsible, disciplined, and dedicated. They adopt time-relevant teaching methods and are just as effective. Teaching is an intellectual profession, and in terms of intellect, I believe there is no difference between men and women. Bash Bari Secondary School has been declared a model school by the government. This was made possible through the hard work and competence of all our staff. As an administrative leader, he does not discriminate between male and female staff. In leadership, it is important to treat everyone equally. He has ensured equal treatment, even when assigning departmental responsibilities or offering professional opportunities.

The school is divided into three levels: primary, lower secondary, and secondary. Each level has a designated in-charge. We have also set up proper office and staff rooms. Responsibilities like health, sports, and other annual programs come with decision-making authority. Activities such as prize distribution and scholarships are carried out based on their recommendations. I have not found any major difference between working with male and female teachers. However, compared to men, women face more difficulties due to societal structures. Patriarchal thinking still exists. Female teachers often hesitate to openly express their challenges. We must create opportunities for female teachers to come forward. The Teachers Service Commission has established a quota system for women as provided by the Constitution. At the primary level, 50% of teachers must be women. But at the lower secondary and secondary levels, the number is still low. I believe the Commission should aim for 50% female teachers at all levels in the future. In terms of competence and skills, female teachers are not behind. Women should also be encouraged to take on principal roles, as many schools led by female principals have excelled in all

areas. While it may sometimes feel easier to coordinate extracurricular activities with male colleagues, it is not difficult to work with female teachers. I believe they don't feel uncomfortable working with me either. There are both opportunities and challenges. Like in other sectors, there are reservation quotas for women in teaching, which is a great opportunity. However, cultural and traditional values can create difficulties for women. Unlike men, women cannot easily leave their household duties. They must manage family and children along with their professional responsibilities. That's why I believe policies should be introduced to allow female teachers to work in schools closer to home. (Source: interview: Field Study: 22 May 2025)

Ramesh Nath head teacher of Nawajoyti Secondary School, Mulpani states that the school has a total of 27 teachers: 17 males and 10 females. In his experience, he has not found any significant differences between male and female teachers. There is no discrimination between them in our school. Female teachers are just as dedicated and responsible as their male counterparts. The school operates from 10 AM to 4 PM for teaching and learning activities. Responsibilities are delegated according to our guidelines. They have assigned a female teacher as the in-charge at the primary level. She has been given full decision-making authority related to improving the quality of student learning. There are no obstacles for female teachers in fulfilling their duties. He has spent over 30 years in the teaching profession and has had the opportunity to work in areas ranging from the Terai to the Himalayas. In all the schools where he has worked, he found it difficult to work with female teachers. They are just as aware and capable as male teachers. Although it is sometimes said that having female teachers can make work difficult, at Laxmi Secondary School, I have found that their presence actually makes things smoother. He observes:

The education policy must bring about fundamental changes that address the issues faced by female teachers. In my experience, female teachers in community schools are often more responsible than male teachers. While female teachers receive maternity leave, male teachers are also given paternity care leave, but I feel this is not necessary. Opportunities and challenges for female teachers seem fairly balanced. Nepal's Constitution has allocated quotas for women, which has led to an increase in the number of female teachers in

community schools. Even when the academic quality is good, the mindset of some parents who choose not to send their children to community schools due to class-based discrimination remains a challenge for all teachers: both male and female. At the same time, there is also an opportunity for all of us teachers to improve the learning of talented but underprivileged students and prove that community schools are equally capable. (Source:Field Study interview : 23 May2025)

The analysis of multiple interviews taken in course of preparing this research with head-teachers and female educators from schools in Mulpani and surrounding regions reveals a layered understanding of gender dynamics within Nepal's teaching profession. In spite of progressive steps in illustration, fixed patriarchal perception, logistical challenges, and systemic gaps still figure out the experiences of female teachers.

A central aspect evolving from these insights is the continuous gendered perception of capability. Menaka Sharma, head-teacher of Rameshwar Primary School, states that even women themselves occasionally hesitate for women's leadership at school. Her internalized insight results create question about equality. Her assumption is in the case of male leadership, even when men are less qualified, they get support from society and partner teachers. This patriarchal notion is deep rooted in every society. Sharma's leadership in a school is justifies and she has viewed that even women can demonstrate for running the school effectively. Her administration is sound and effective for running school smoothly in a male-dominated society. Her successful efforts to reopen the school through direct parental involvement justify the same thing.

Sumnima Rajbansi and Sarita Uppadhaya point out the dual burden female teachers face. They assume that managing home responsibilities and fulfilling professional expectations are two different things. They note that societal and cultural norms still make it more challenging for women teachers. Some female teachers who are with families or living far from school have experienced difficulties. They also emphasize that only strong determination and family support can help women face these challenges. Sarita Uppadhaya outlines that teaching is a professional space with more opportunities than threats for women. It is in connecting with young children and contributing intellectually. She worries

that it is the important to update the state policies to make the profession more attractive and equitable.

Sneha Sharma's observation adds a unique layer. As an unmarried woman, she has fewer household responsibilities and she is more flexible in her teaching role. Her insights point to the social validation of teaching as a respectable profession for women. She knows a lack of confidence among women in male-dominated settings creates problems to empower them. For this, assertiveness of training could be valuable for imparting quality education in school level.

Jamuna Kumari Jha brings a vital socioeconomic perspective. As a teacher from the Madhesi community, she experiences how teaching is convenient for women due to its compatibility with domestic duties. Though teaching in a place with different cultural environment, she feels it is necessary to improve the status of teachers in rural areas. She strongly critiques the low payment and inadequate benefits should be addressed by the state government. For her, salary dissatisfaction and resource scarcity are major barriers. She also identifies challenges arising from students' diverse cultural backgrounds. In rural areas, it is very difficult to teach in the classroom due to the lack of educational materials. She highlights how intersectional factors (gender, ethnicity, economic policy) shape educational delivery and teacher experiences.

The perspective of male school leaders, including Manish Kumar and Ramesh Nath, is supportive for female teachers. Both teachers have actively prioritized the hiring of female teachers, and acknowledge their competence is good to run the school smoothly. The female teachers understand their responsibility and follow school discipline. Manish Kumar particularly praises women's intellectual ability with men and states the importance of assigning leadership roles to women. He views lingering societal patriarchy and advocates for policies to enable women to work closer to home. They have school and household responsibilities, and the pragmatic solution is to address gendered constraints. Nath advocates for these sentiments and adds that equal delegation of authority (e.g., putting women in charge of the primary level) has brought positive results effectively in

his school. His long teaching career across regions strengthens that female teachers are capable of teaching and valuable to society.

The overall analysis shows that a complex but encouraging picture of female teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality, Jhapa, Koshi Province is satisfactory. Female teachers in Nepal experience challenges. Gender bias, societal expectations, limited benefits, and administrative constraints, their lack of competence, adaptability, and leadership potential are widely recognized. Both male and female view call for policy reforms for maternity benefits, and posting in local level. It has created a problem from anthropological aspect. Additionally, expanding leadership opportunities for women and challenging internalized patriarchal norms are important to ensuring full gender equity in education.

6.1 Cultural and social support

One of the most inspiring findings from the data analysis is that the female teachers need high level of family support. Nearly 89% of respondents stated that their families are strongly supportive of their profession. Only 1.41% have expressed neutrality and none experiencing active discouragement. This observation indicates that a substantial cultural shift in rural areas is significant. For this, women's employment outside the home might have faced problems.

However, cultural beliefs still impact career choices. While 39% of women believed culture influenced their careers either significantly *or* somewhat, a notable 31% saw a *significant* impact. This suggests that although support exists, deep-rooted cultural norms continue to limit women's full autonomy in career decision-making. Despite these barriers, the perception of female competence among students and parents is mostly positive, with 69% believing female teachers are equally competent as males, and 11% perceiving them as being more respected. However, 14% believed women were less respected, showing that respect for female authority in classrooms still faces resistance in some segments of society.

6.2 Navigating societal restrictions and gender stereotypes

In terms of cultural and societal restrictions, over 60% of the respondents reported facing *no* restrictions, and 56% said gender stereotypes did not affect them at all. This is a positive indication that women in Mulpani are progressively overcoming traditional limitations. However, 7% experienced gender stereotyping to a great extent, and 22% reported experiencing it rarely. This points to the continued presence of implicit gender norms in workplace dynamics, especially in promotions or administrative roles where leadership is often still male-dominated.

6.3 Economic opportunities and limitations

The teaching profession offers economic independence for many women, but not without its limitations. Regarding income satisfaction, only 11% reported being very satisfied, while 41% were somewhat satisfied. A worrying 31% were not satisfied, indicating that while teaching may be a stable job, it may not provide financial sufficiency, particularly in rural settings. On financial independence, only 32% felt completely independent, and 35% felt somewhat independent. Another 25% of women relied on *other sources*, such as family or spouses, to meet their financial needs. This reflects the broader challenge of under-compensation in public sector teaching, especially for women who often hold junior or temporary posts.

Despite this, salaries were reported as equal by 34%, and 62% acknowledged some gender-based facilities (though not significant). This suggests a relatively equitable pay structure, but perhaps unequal access to benefits and leadership positions.

6.4 Barriers to career progression

Obstacles in career progression remain a serious concern. While 70% said they faced no obstacles, 21% noted other types of difficulties, and 3% directly attributed barriers to gender bias. These “other” obstacles could include lack of mentorship, household responsibilities, or limited access to further training. Still, career satisfaction levels were reasonably high: 35% were very satisfied, and 45% were somewhat satisfied, showing that the profession continues to serve as a meaningful and rewarding path. Impressively, 96% reported being very confident in their role as teachers, showing high professional identity and motivation. For career progression, different psychological aspects are observed.

- **Individual factors** include a teacher's psychological resilience, boundary-setting skills, and strategies for managing role transitions. Effective self-regulation helps mitigate conflict, enhancing engagement and well-being.
- **Family-related dynamics:** such as emotional support, workload sharing, and home environment can either buffer or exacerbate the conflict's impact. High family support reduces stress spillover into the workplace.
- **Institutional influences** involve workload expectations, administrative support, professional development opportunities, and the presence of family-friendly policies. Supportive leadership, clear boundaries, and flexible work arrangements enhance job satisfaction.

6.5 Balancing professional and domestic responsibilities

Work-life balance is one of the most pronounced challenges for women in Mulpani. An overwhelming 83% of teachers identified work-life balance as their biggest professional challenge. Although 61% said balancing work and family is somewhat easy, nearly 30% admitted they struggled to manage time, and another 27% found it difficult. These numbers clearly indicate that the dual roles women carry as professionals and homemakers remain a major source of stress. When asked about their biggest challenge, 75% cited time constraints, while only 7% mentioned lack of family support, and 8% noted workplace pressure. This reveals that the core difficulty lies not in external resistance but in the overwhelming demand on their time and energy.

6.6 Institutional environment: supportive but uneven

Institutional environments for women teachers appear generally safe and non-discriminatory. A reassuring 87% of respondents reported always feeling safe, and 70% experienced no workplace discrimination. However, 14% said they had experienced discrimination sometimes, which remains a concern and should not be overlooked.

When it comes to gender equality policies, 30% said their institutions had effective policies, while 28% said such policies did not exist, and another 21% noted poor implementation. This reflects a need for stronger enforcement and clarity regarding institutional commitments to gender equality.

6.7 Governmental role and perceived future

The government's role in supporting women teachers received mixed reviews. While 22% of the respondents believed the support was absolute, 54% acknowledged that improvements were needed. Alarming, 24% said either not much is being done *or* no support exists. This is a clear call for the government to take more active, targeted measures in addressing gender disparities and improving teaching conditions.

Looking ahead, the outlook remains cautiously optimistic. 52% of the teachers believed there would be more opportunities and improvements, while 24% expected no significant change, and 18% anticipated more challenges. This split reflects both hope and realism women recognize the progress being made but remain alert to ongoing systemic barriers.

6.8 Connecting the dots: opportunities vs. challenges

It clearly shows that opportunities and challenges in the teaching profession are deeply intertwined for women in Mulpani:

- **Opportunities include** strong family support, growing societal respect, equitable pay, job security, and a deep sense of professional confidence. Teaching is one of the few occupations that permits women to stabilize domestic roles with their teaching profession.
- **Challenges** persist in the form of limited promotions. The moderate-income dissatisfaction, time pressure, uneven institutional policies, and lingering cultural expectations are its challenges. The discrimination is low, indirect, and a lack of supportive policies continues to hamper their career advancement.

The teaching profession of women teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality promises a transformative pathway for them. It combines personal fulfillment, community respect, and economic participation. Understanding the full potential of this opportunity requires reducing systemic challenges. Proper implementation of gender equality policies, mentorship opportunities, and flexible scheduling can significantly ease the burdens faced by women educators.

Empowering women in education is just about gender parity. It is about creating a more resilient, inclusive, and forward-thinking teaching workforce. The women of Mulpani have demonstrated strength, dedication, and adaptability. Now, the next step lies in transforming these attributes into sustained institutional and policy-level support.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion, Recommendation and Implication

7.1 Conclusion

This research uses quantitative data with qualitative understandings to explore how social, cultural, and individual plans meet together for improving the professional lives of female teachers in Mulpani Rural Municipality 13 and 14, Jhapa. Through an anthropological lens, these women are not merely educators, but actors navigating and re-scripting traditional structures. The overwhelming familial support (88.7%) signals a meaningful cultural transformation: rural families no longer see teaching as incongruous with women's roles. Nearly 39% reported that cultural expectations influence career decisions. This tension between collective endorsement and ingrained gendered behavior is emblematic of rural Nepalese social change, where women teachers straddle innovation and tradition. Notably, although 69% of parents and students see them as equally competent, a minority (14%) still conflate authority with masculinity.

Stereotypes and restrictions are now marginal, yet significant. Over half the sample report no societal constraints or stereotypes. Yet an anthropological reading shows that the persistent minority, experiencing stereotyping reveals the silent structures still at play: implicit bias in leadership roles, classroom interactions, or social expectations. These subtle gendered norms continue to shape teacher's lived experiences. Female teachers enjoy institutionally supported pay equity, recognized by 34% of respondents. However, only one-third feel fully financially independent. For many, teaching remains a dual-role occupation (profession intertwined with economic fragility, compensated not through pay but social esteem and stability). Reliance on supplementary income sources or spousal support reflects broader gendered divisions in rural economies.

Despite structural limitations, the majority (96%) feel confident and committed. Professional identity is sustained by a resilient subjectivity: female teachers exhibit perseverance, psychological agency, and moral commitment to their communities. These qualities encourage women to persist through ambiguous policy environments and limited promotion trajectories. Following the Atteh et al. (2020) framework, work–family tension is central to these teachers' lives. An overwhelming 83% report stress from balancing

school and household roles. Anthropologically, this reflects the gendered temporal regimes that rural women live under, where domestic demands persist irrespective of wage labor. Time scarcity (74%) emerges as cultural as much as logistical, with work rhythms shaped by patriarchal scheduling and expectations.

Educational environments reproduce wider social norms: 87% teachers feel safe at school, and report occasional discrimination signals that cultural thresholds of acceptable behavior still comprise indirect exclusion. Gender-equity policies are in practice, and in about 30% is in schools. Their partial implementation suggests that bureaucratic frameworks have yet to fully convert sociocultural ethos into daily practices. Teachers feel government support is fragmented only 22% view it as robust, and 54% recognize incomplete progress. This trend suggests that a spatially uneven development regime rural tertiary teachers inherit poor educational standards. 52% teachers look to the future with measured optimism, and it reflects an emergent *hikmah* (wisdom-based hope), where structural short comings coexist with inspirational self-belief and collective expectations of progress.

7.2 Recommendations: Toward a Culturally Embedded Empowerment

To improve gender equity policies, the government of Nepal must enforce clear promotion system. It provides structured mentorship and opportunities for women. Family-friendly policies such as flexible working hours, part-time teaching system, and childcare support are necessary to make the teaching profession more accountable. It accommodates for women to balance work and household responsibilities.

Teaching profession development can expand with targeted training programs. It focuses on digital literacy, classroom innovation, and emotional resilience. Chances for peer learning and group learning such as exchange visits with successful rural educators can support to build capacity and morale system in isolated or under-resourced schools.

To improve work–family pressure, schools can reduce teaching administrative workloads by hiring extra teachers. Community-based family awareness initiatives can promote shared domestic responsibilities, encourage a more equitable distribution of household duties.

A gender-sensitive organizational culture is crucial. The head teachers must be trained in inclusive leadership for gender equity policies. This fosters an environment where women teachers can thrive and be recognized.

Better government support is necessary. It includes better access to training, financial incentives, and educational resources for rural teachers. Inclusive initiatives, designed in collaboration with teachers, can address problems such as compensation, workload, and career progression. To reinforce cultural-cognitive change, community dialogues should challenge deep-rooted gender norms in schools. Female teacher leadership in public events can help normalize women's authority and inspire future generations.

Efforts must combine structural reform with cultural recognition. Policies like transparent promotions and childcare support can be implemented in the classroom. Incentives aligned with local values such as grants for female-led educational initiatives can increase societal acceptance and visibility.

Time-use interventions such as 'time bank' or shared neighborhood childcare can improve women's daily domestic burden. Narrative campaigns should promote male participation in household duties as a mark of modern civic responsibility.

Economic pathways such as village-level micro-enterprise grants for teacher-innovators can enhance financial independence. Coordinating teacher development with local literacy or tutoring projects helps diversify income while aligning with community goals. Alongside this, establishing professional support networks and culturally meaningful recognition like school ceremonies or seasonal pujas celebrating female educator's achievements can boost morale and reinforce collective respect for women in the teaching profession.

7.3 Implication of the Study

This study is based on Mulpani Rural Municipality, it's just about wards 13 and 14. From the anthropology side of things, female teachers in Mulpani experience cultural, everyday problems and transformative life. They are not just clocking in and out; they're

shaking things up, crossing boundaries, and honestly, sometimes just trying to keep the peace between what is expected and what they actually want.

Especially the women teachers are kind of caught in the middle, half stuck in the old ways, half chasing something better. They've got to deal with everyone's opinions, their own dreams, and all the unspoken rules. If we want this little spark of change to last, it is not enough to just throw some government program at them. They need solutions that actually fit stuff like celebrating their wins, tapping into what locals already know, and having real conversations about what it means to be a woman, to work, to be valued.

Women teachers teaching in Mulpani are betting on the future of rural Nepal, for real. It is not just about teaching, and it is about mixing up culture, money, and responsibility so something new can grow. When they smash together real-life stories and official rules, these teachers turn into way more than lesson-givers. They are the spark, the glue, and the ones helping write a future that's actually fairer for everyone.

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Appendix: 1

Date:

I..... agree to interview with you in Anthropology from Mechi Multiple Campus this research on” **Gender in the Teaching Profession: An Anthropological Study of Schools in Mulpani Rular Municipality, Jhapa. Rural Municipality Wards 13 & 14**” for the fulfillment of my study of Master's Degree. This study explores the roles, opportunities, and challenges faced by women in the teaching profession within Mulpani Wards 13 and 14 of Jhapa. Using an anthropological lens, it examines social, cultural, and institutional factors influencing their experiences. The research highlights both empowerment through education and persistent gender-based barriers in rural school settings.

I express my commitment that this data will only be used for the study purpose. It will not be used anywhere. For this, I have requested you to fill up the questionnaires for academic purposes only. These data will be safe in accordance with the Information Act 2015.

Questionnaires

Name: ----- (Optional) Date of birth: -----

Cast: ----- Religion: -----

Questionnaires: -----

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. What is your age group?
 - a) Below 25
 - b) 25-35
 - c) 36-45
 - d) Above 45

2. What is your marital status?
 - a) Single
 - b) Married
 - c) Divorced/Separated
 - d) Widowed
3. What is your highest level of education?
 - a) SLC/ SEE
 - b) Intermediate (+2)
 - c) Bachelor's degree
 - d) Master's degree & above
4. What type of school do you teach in?
 - a) Community School
 - b) Government by private run school
 - c) Other (Specify)
5. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
 - a) Less than 5 years
 - b) 5-10 years
 - c) 11-20 years
 - d) More than 20 years
6. In which level have you taught recently?
 - a) Below 1 classes
 - b) 1 to 5 classes
 - c) 5-8 classes
 - d) 9-12 classes

Section 2: Cultural and Social Factors

7. Does your family support your profession as a teacher?
 - a) Strongly supportive
 - b) Somewhat supportive
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not supportive
8. Do you think cultural beliefs impact women's career choices in teaching?
 - a) Yes, significantly
 - b) Somewhat
 - c) Not much
 - d) No impact
9. How do students and parents perceive female teachers compared to male teachers?
 - a) Equally competent
 - b) More respected than male teachers
 - c) Less respected than male teachers
 - d) No opinion
10. Have you faced any cultural or societal restrictions in your teaching profession?
 - a) Yes, frequently
 - b) Yes, occasionally
 - c) Rarely
 - d) No, never
11. Do gender stereotypes affect your role as a teacher?
 - a) Yes, to a great extent
 - b) Yes, to some extent
 - c) Rarely
 - d) No, not at all

Section 3: Economic and Occupational Factors

12. Are you satisfied with your income as a teacher?
- a) Very satisfied
 - b) Somewhat satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not satisfied
13. Do you think there is a gender-based facility in teaching?
- a) Yes, significantly
 - b) Yes, but not much
 - c) No, salaries are equal
 - d) Not sure
14. Have you faced any obstacles in getting promoted at your workplace?
- a) Yes, due to gender bias
 - b) Yes, due to other reasons
 - c) No obstacles
 - d) Not applicable
15. Do you feel financially independent through your profession?
- a) Yes, completely
 - b) Somewhat
 - c) No, I rely on other sources
 - d) Not sure

Section 4: Work-Life Balance

16. How easy is it for you to balance work and family responsibilities?
- a) Very easy
 - b) Somewhat easy
 - c) Difficult
 - d) Very difficult
17. Does your teaching job allow you enough time for household responsibilities?
- a) Yes, completely
 - b) Yes, but with difficulty
 - c) No, I struggle to manage both
 - d) No, I have to rely on others
18. What is your biggest challenge in balancing work and home life?
- a) Time constraints
 - b) Lack of family support
 - c) Workplace pressure
 - d) None

Section 5: Institutional and Workplace Environment

19. Have you ever faced discrimination at your workplace due to being a woman?
- a) Yes, frequently
 - b) Yes, sometimes
 - c) No, rarely
 - d) No, never
20. Are there any policies in your institution that promote gender equality?
- a) Yes, and they are effective
 - b) Yes, but they are not properly implemented
 - c) No, such policies do not exist
 - d) Not sure
21. Do you feel safe in your workplace?
- a) Yes, always
 - b) Yes, most of the time
 - c) No, sometimes I feel unsafe
 - d) No, I often feel unsafe

Section 6: Psychological and Career Growth Aspects

22. How satisfied are you with your career progression?
- a) Very satisfied
 - b) Somewhat satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not satisfied
23. Do you feel confident in your professional role as a teacher?
- a) Yes, very confident
 - b) Somewhat confident
 - c) Neutral
 - d) No, not confident
24. What is the biggest challenge you face as a woman in the teaching profession?
- a) Workplace discrimination
 - b) Work-life balance
 - c) Limited opportunities for promotion
 - d) Gender payment gap
25. Do you think the government is doing enough to support women in teaching?
- a) Yes, absolutely
 - b) Yes, but improvements are needed
 - c) No, not much is being done
 - d) No, there is no support
26. How do you see the future of women in the teaching profession in Haldibari?
- a) More opportunities and improvements
 - b) No significant change
 - c) More challenges and difficulties
 - d) Unsure

Appendix: 2

Some photos collected during Research



Photo 1: Head Teacher Mr. Manish Kumar, Bash Bari Secondary School, 22 May 2025



Photo 2: Mrs. Phulmaya Sharma, Head teacher Parmeswar Aa. School, 25 May 2025



Photo 3: Mr. Ramesh Nath, Head Teacher, Nawajyoti Secondary School 30 May 2025



Photo: Nagarik Yekata Aa. School, 25 May 2025



Photo: Women Teachers at Bash Bari Secondary School, 22 May 2025



Photo: Ms. Sumnima Rajbanshi teacher, Bash Bari Secondary School 23 May 2025

Appendix: 3 Interview Personalities



Phulmaya Sharma



Sumnima Rajbanshi



Sarita Uppadhaya



Sneha Bhattarai



Interview 5: Jamuna kumari Jha



Interview 6: Manish Kumar



Interview 7: Ramesh Nath

Appendix: 4

List of schools and number of teachers

Community Schools

S.N.	Name of Schools	Number of teachers
1	Nawa Sirjana Aa Bi, Haldibari-2	Male=2, Female=2
2	Janata Aa Bi, Haldibari-2	Male=2, Female=1
3	Rastriya Yekata Aa Bi, Haldibari-2	Male=3, Female=4
4	Rameswar Aa Bi, Haldibari-3	Male=0 , Female=7
5	Sarswati Aa Bi, Haldibari-2	Male=7 , Female=5
6	Laxmi Ma Bi, +2, Haldibari-3	Male=17, Female=10
7	Panchayat Ma Bi, Haldibari-3	Male=6, Female=11
8	Haldibari Ma Bi, Haldibari-3	Male=33, Female=14

Private Schools

S.N.	Name of schools	Number of teachers
1	Canary Academy, Haldibari-2	Male= , Female=
2	Sigma English School, Haldibari-2	Male=10, Female=15
3	Children Garden English Ma Bi, Haldibari-3	Male=14, Female=14

Source: Field Study, Haldibari Gaupalika, 2025

Appendix: 5

Changed Name, Place and Wada number

Haldibari – Mulpani

Wada Number 2-3 = 13-14, 5=11 (11,12,13,14,15 Changed)

Community School

S.N.	Name of Schools	Changed Name of School
1	Nawa Sirjana Aa Bi	Janjoyti Aa Bi
2	Janata Aa Bi	Balgopal Aa Bi
3	Rastriya Yekata Aa Bi	Nagrik Aa Bi
4	Rameswar Aa Bi	Parmeswar Aa Bi
5	Sarswati Aa Bi	Bhadrakali Aa Bi
6	Laxmi Ma Bi, +2	Nawa jyoti Ma. Bi.
7	Panchayat Ma Bi	Nirdal Ma Bi.
8	Haldibari Ma Bi	Bash Bari Mabi

Private Schools

S.N.	Name of Teacher	Changed Name of Teacher
1	Ram Prasad Ghimire	Ramesh Nath
2	Tank Bahadur Pakhrin	Manish Kumar
3	Menaka Sharma	Phulmaya Sharma
4	Sarbari Bhattarai	Sneha Bhattarai
5	Uma Bhattraï	Sarita Uppadhaya
6	Bi Kumari Jha	Jamuna kumari Jha
7	Mamata Rajbanshi	Sumnima Rajbanshi
	Name of schools	Changed Name
1	Sigma English School	Asmita English School
2	Children Graden English School	Buddha Ma. Bi